

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

P310/1

PROSE AND POETRY

1. PROSE:

This is a form of writing which is free and expressive. It is the ordinary form of writing used in;

- Magazines
- Newspapers
- Textbooks
- Biographies
- Autobiographies
- Etc.

Prose is the type of writing that pays attention to grammatical rules, punctuation;

- Ideas in prose flow freely in sentences and paragraphs.

2. POETRY

- Nikki Giovanni describes a poem as “Pure energy horizontally contained between the mind of the poet and the ear of the reader.”
- Archibald MacLeish says that a poem is “Dumb, silent, wordless and motionless in time.
- Marianne Moore describes a poem as “all this fiddle.”
- A poem is a compressed piece of writing arranged in patterns of lines and sounds expressing deep thoughts, feelings or human experiences.

Epitrite:

This is a metrical foot in a poem in Greek and Latin prosody. It consists of one short syllabus and three long syllables. The position of the short syllable may vary and it may be first, 2nd, 3rd or 4th in the foot. An epitrite is also called ‘Paeon.’ Aristotle used it in prose.

- Poetry uses language to condense experience into an intensely concentrated package, with each sound, each word, each image and each line carrying great weight.

A poem may be short or long, accessible or obscure, may express a mood or tell a story; it may conform to a familiar poetic form – a sonnet, a couplet, a haiku – or follow no conventional pattern, it may or may not have a regular, identifiable metre or a rhyme scheme; it may depend heavily on elaborate imagery, figures of speech, irony, complex allusions or symbols, or repeated sounds – or it may include none of these features conventionally associated with poetry.

Features of Prose and Poetry:

PROSE	POETRY
➤ Prose is built on grammatical precision	➤ Poetry is built on brevity which does not allow conformity to grammatical rules.
➤ Prose is written without metre or rhythm or rhyme.	➤ Poetry is written in metre and rhythm. This makes the life of poetry.
➤ In prose, sentences are used.	➤ In poetry lines are used.
➤ Prose groups sentences into paragraphs.	➤ Lines in poetry are grouped in stanzas.
➤ Prose is expressive and uses many words, paragraphs, pages and chapters to express a feeling, give an account or analyze a problem.	➤ Poetry is subtle, and compressed in that it takes a few lines to present the same material.
➤ The writer in prose has not word limit.	➤ The writer has word limit.
➤ Language is more natural and grammatical.	➤ Language is figurative and rhythmical.
➤ Can be understood by reading once.	➤ More than one reading may be needed to understand the meaning of the poem.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES.

a) Parts of speech

There are eight parts of speech. They are;

(i) The Noun

This is a name of a person, place, thing or idea;

- Elvis
- Hadijah
- Kampala
- Namagoma
- Pen
- Tree
- Lion
- Lorry.

(ii) Pronoun

A pronoun is used in place of a noun or noun phrase to avoid repetition.

- He
- She
- It
- Us
- Them
- Those

- We
- Her

(iii) Adjective

This describes, modifies or gives more info about a noun or pronoun.

- Good
- Bad
- Happy
- Young
- Funny
- Any use of colour in description: a white dress.

(iv) Adverb

This modifies a verb, adjective or another adverb. The adverb tells how (often), where, when.

- Quickly
- Very quickly
- Loudly
- Quite fast
- Quite good
- Slowly.
- Very slowly

(v) Conjunction

This joins two words, ideas, phrases together and shows how they are connected.

- And
- But
- Because
- Yet
- So.

(vi) Verb

This is an action word. It shows an action or a state of being.

- Go
- Speak
- Eat
- Are, is
- Listen
- Walk
- Pick
- Cry
- Wash
- Write.

(vii) Preposition

This shows the relationship of a noun or pronoun to another word.

- At
- On
- In
- From
- Under
- With
- About
- Beside
- By
- Against
- Before
- After

(viii) Interjection

This is a word or phrase that expresses a strong emotion/feeling. It is a short exclamation.

- Wow!
- Aha!
- Oh!
- What!
- No!
- Oh my!
- Poor him/her!

LITERARY TERMS

— COMPARISON —

(b) Figurative Language Usage;

Figurative language uses figures of speech.

The following are the figures of speech;

I. Metaphor:

This is when something is directly described by referring to it as something different and suggesting that it has similar qualities to that thing – a basis of similarity.

You've seen that heap of rags.
 That pollutes the air-conditioned
 City centre,
 That house that creeps about.....
 Extract from the Guilt of Giving – Laban Erap.

- The heap of rags.
- That house that creeps about. } All refer to the beggar

Other examples of metaphor;

John is a pig.

Get out you dog.

Rose is a snake.

The ogre beat me.

II. Smile

This is an indirect comparison of two things using like, as. The comparison is with a more familiar thing so that the reader gets the correct mental impression.

- He eats like a pig.
- He walks like a gorilla.
- Jane runs like a hare/rabbit.
- He ran as fast as a cheetah.
- The man's eyes, red as palm wine, bulged out of their sockets.

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread against the sky
Like a patient etherized upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half deserted streets,
The muttering retreats.....

Extract from The love song of J.Alfred Prufrock by T.S. Eliot

Like a patient etherized upon a table;

T.S Eliot compares the evening with the operation table in a theatre – meant to create fear, insecurity or restlessness the evening evokes as compared to the half – dead patient on a table – unconscious.

III. Metonymy (Change of name)

It is a figure of speech where an object, event, or idea is referred to by naming some attributes or quality associated with it.

- A pen is mightier than a sword – Wisdom is stronger than strength.
- He is always chasing after skirts – He is a womanizer.
- The spade feeds the monarch – Commoners feed the king.
- He succeeded to the throne when he was seven – He became a king at the age of seven.

IV. Synecdoche

This is the relationship between a part and the whole (of that object).

- All voices shouted, “Kill him.” (all people)
- He entered only to find two pairs of eyes staring at him. (two people)
- The tyres screeched to a halt. (the car stopped)
- The lady in cotton came to see her. (putting a cotton dress)
- The beggar was happy to receive a silver. (money)

V. Personification

In personification, an abstract idea, an inanimate object or aspect of nature is given attributes of a human being.

- The smiling sun.
- The dimpled spider.
- The trees were waving at us.
- Our mother Uganda.

The wind stood up and gave a shout,
He whistled on his fingers, and
Kicked the withered leaves about,
And thumped the branches with his hand,
And said he would kill, and kill, and kill;
And so he will! and so he will!

Extract from The Wind – J. Stephens.

The poet personifies the wind as a violent, blood-thirsty man.

VI. Apostrophe

In apostrophe, the speaker addresses himself to a particular person or thing as though it were present and listening to him.

In this respect, the speaker bridges space and time by addressing something/somebody who is not there with him/her but miles away. E.g.

-The Lord's Prayer recited by Christians addressed to the Almighty God who is nowhere to be seen.

-“O Rose, thou art sick!” from the sick Rose – William Blake.

The poet directly addresses the rose flower which he personifies into a woman called Rose.

VII. Juxtaposition

In juxtaposition, two elements-objects, events or ideas are placed side by side without comment so that the reader can make a personal unbiased judgement.

VIII. Allusion

This is a reference, often to literature, history, mythology or the Bible, that is unacknowledged in the text, but the author expects the reader to recognize the text from which the reference is made.

-Biblical allusion

-Literary allusion

-Historical allusion

IX. Antithesis

This uses vivid contrast by balancing contrasting ideas as seen in; Elegy (on the night before execution)

— EMPHASIS —

Some figures of speech are used for emphasis;

X. Hyperbole

This is a deliberate exaggeration intended to achieve emphasis of a point or feeling.

-I was so hungry that I could eat an ox.

-During the curfew, Tom saw the soldiers and flew into the bush.

-At the party, John drank a drum full of alcohol.

XI. The Rhetorical Question

This is a question which posed to underscore a point or emphasize one, but not to obtain an answer/reply because the answer is always obvious.

Why are the eyes of the beautiful

and unmarked children

in the uniforms of the country

bewildered and shy,

Why do they widen in terror

Extract from Parades, Parades by Derek Walcott.

What formless forms do you sense

As you grope after gifts beyond your reach,

What dark beauties do you stare at

As you smile the smile of caged captives;

What longing thoughts lie beyond those diseased sockets

As you brood over what might have been;

Extract from 'The Blind' by John Ssemwanga (Ug)

XII. Repetition

We repeat words, phrases, lines/sentences/stanzas to give emphasis.

Prose and Poetry employ this technique to underscore a point.

-Tarantella – a poem by Hilaire Belloc.

-I love you, my Gentle one – R.Bitamazire

Do you remember an Inn,

Miranda?

Do you remember an Inn?

Extract from Tarantella – Hilaire Belloc.

My brother you flash your teeth in response to every hypocrisy.

My brother with gold-rimmed glasses.....

My poor brother.....

Extract from 'The Renegade' by David Diop.

I love you, my gentle one.

My love is the fresh milk in the Rubicli...

Because you possess my heart

I love you, my gentle one.

Extract from “I love you my gentle one” – R. Bitamazire.

The dog in Kivulu,

Thin, bony and yawning;

The dog in Kivulu,

Painting and squatting.....

Extract from ‘The Dog in Kivulu’ – R. Bitamazire.

XIII. Refrain/Chorus

This is a poetic device where a line or lines of a poem are repeated after each stanza and is most common in songs.

— EFFECT —

Sometimes the writer/poem wishes to score a given effect. In this way, he employs the following devices;

XIV. Irony:

When irony is used, there is a discrepancy between what is said and the truth meant – usually opposite.

-Irony has two levels of meaning – the surface and the real.

-Irony can be verbal, literal or figurative, situational or character or dramatic.

-Verbal irony is when people use words which oppose what they actually mean.

-Situational irony is when the opposite of what we expect to occur actually occurs-
Police station is robbed.

-Irony of character is when people behave in a manner contrary to what we expect of them-for instance, an old person behaving immaturely and vice versa.

-The effect of irony is achieved mainly through humour and sarcasm.

Sarcasm:

Biting irony is sarcasm.

Sarcasm is achieved through reproaching or making bitter criticism by using remarks which portray happiness or reflect a light-hearted, calm state of mind. The effect of sarcasm is to mock people for their wrongs.

Sometimes sarcasm is used to mock people for their ineptness or physical incapacity or endowment.

Satire:

When we talk about satire, we do not mean any device per se because it is just an effect achieved when we combine irony and sarcasm to ridicule human weaknesses, follies and vices in a joking, playful way.

When we use light-hearted/playful language to criticize very big follies (evils) and presenting the characters involved as laughable, ridiculous and ludicrous e.g. Building The Nation-Batai.

E.g.

- a) We have seen wars
We know their taste is sweet
And their smell is good
Smoke from the guns is all we dream about
Waiting for our opulent leaders
To start another war.

Extract from: 'War after War' By J.S. Mbiti

It is ironical to say that war tastes sweet and smells good.

- b) Other ironical statements:
-I love you very much. That's why I killed your parents.
-I killed Caesar not because I loved him less but because I loved Rome more.

When irony is used for dramatic effect, it is called dramatic irony.

XV. Paradox:

A paradox is a witty statement/ideal/situation which is self-contradictory because it seems to be contrary to common sense/reason. E.g.

- 'The child is the father of man.' – W. Wordsworth
- 'We often fall in love only to hate.'
- "Foul is fair as fair is foul."
- "Those who save their lives will lose it'
but those who lose their lives for me
will save it." – Bible.

XVI. Oxymoron:

An oxymoron is a paradox of two words

- Paradox because the two words contradict.
- Because of the disagreements between language and meaning, paradoxes and oxymorons are sometimes considered to be aspects of irony.
- A wise fool
 - Bitter sweetness
 - Loving hate
 - Sweet death

LANGUAGE USE

XVII. Euphemism

- This device is basically for civility. The words and expressions which are socially offensive or embarrassing are expressed in softer and more acceptable terms.
- He was found sleeping with his brother's wife – having sex.

- He passed away – he died.
- He has gone for a short/long call – pee/pup.

XVIII. Climax

In literature, climax is a device where descriptions, ideas, actions, are arranged in an order of increasing intensity and impressiveness, such that the strongest expression or emotion or idea is placed at the end i.e., they build to a climax- the highest point.

With climax, the effect is always achieved as the highest point marks a turning point-resolves tension or conflict, clears suspense or offers solution to a problem.

XIX. Bathos/anti-climax

In this device, the climax is not the end of action but rather, events/episodes less exciting follow the climax.

The device literary means a descent or drastic fall.

-Bathos is the opposite of climax.

In this device, the reader is disappointed by being let down in his expectation of what is going to happen in the poem. The reader is let down from the sublime to the ridiculous, from the good to the bad.

Bathos is often accompanied with surprise – events take a course the reader didn't expect and so he is surprisingly disappointed.

- A good example of bathos/anti-climax after the climax is the poem, 'Richard Cory' – Edwin Arlington Robinson.

XX. Pun

This is the playful use of words. Here, a poet may play with different words but with the same pronunciation or one word but with two or more meanings.

The writer plays with either the different meanings of the same word or plays with the different sounds of the word to achieve a rhetorical effect.

Pun is used for emphasis or to sound witty because they give pleasure of reading.

Pun can intensify the seriousness of a poem. Examples of pun include;

- Never trouble trouble before trouble troubles you' it sounds childish but when deeply analyzed it carries serious meaning.

A HYMN TO GOD THE FATHER

Wilt thou forgive that sin where I began,

Which is my sin, though it were done before?
Wilt forgive those sins, through which I run,
And do run still: though still I do deplore?
When thou hast done, thou hast not done,
For, I have more.

I have sin of fear, that when I have spun
My last thread, I shall perish on the shore;
Swear by thy self, that at my death thy son
Shall shine as shines now, and therefore;
And, having done that, thou has done,
I fear no more.

John Donne

XXI. Litotes/understatement

This is a figure of speech consisting of an understatement in which an affirmative is expressed by negating its opposite.

- In litotes, a strong affirmation is expressed simply by the negative or the contrary.
- Peter is a giant of no small size.
- I come from no mean parentage.
- Being admitted to SMACON is not a small achievement.
- A storm of no small force drove our ship ashore.
- John is not an easy person.

XXII. Chiasmus

This is a verbal pattern in which the 2nd half of an expression is balanced against the first but with the parts reversed.

- ‘Nice to see you, to see you nice.’
- “People should eat to live and not live to eat.

XXIII. Anaphora

This is the repetition of the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or verses.

- I needed a drink, I need a lot of life insurance,
I needed a vacation, I needed a home in the country.
What I had was a coat, a hat and a gun.

Farewell, my lovely, 1940 by Raymond Chandler.

XXIV. Polysyndeton

This is a literary device which refers to the process of using conjunctions or connecting words frequently in a sentence, placed very close to one another, as opposed to the usual norm of using them sparsely, only where are technically needed.

- The use of polysyndeton is primarily for adding a dramatic effect as they have a strong rhetorical presence.
- Here and there and everywhere. (Here, there and everywhere)
- Rose and Elsie and Jane and Daisy and peter all planned to go for a picnic. (Rose, Elsie, Jane, Daisy and Peter planned to go for a picnic)

XXV. Periphrasis

This refers to the use of excessive language and surplus words to convey a meaning that could otherwise be conveyed with fewer words and in more direct a manner. The use of this device can be to embellish a sentence, to create a grander effect, to beat around the bush and to draw attention away from the crux of the message being conveyed. E.g.

Instead of saying:

“I am displeased with your behavior.”

Then you say:

“The manner in which you have conducted yourself in my presence of late has caused me to feel uncomfortable and has resulted in my feeling disgruntled and disappointed with you.”

XXVI. Adjuration (Noun)

Is an earnest request, entreaty. A solemn or desperate urging or counselling. An adjuration for all citizens of the beleaguered city to take shelter.

XXVII. Asyndeton (Noun)

Rhetoric: The omission of conjunctions, as in “He has provided the poor with jobs, with opportunity, with self-respect.

XXVIII. Hyperbaton (Noun)

Plural – hyperbatons, hyperbata

- Rhetoric: the use, especially for emphasis, of a word order other than the expected or usual one, as in: “Bird, thou never wert.”

XXIX. Diatyposis (Singular)

Plural – Diatyposes.

1. A testament.
2. Rhetoric – a document containing of rules to live by for one’s audience or for posterity.

3. Polyptota (Plural)

Singular – Polyptoton

- The stylistic scheme in which words derived from the same root are repeated e.g. Strong = Strength. Common in Latin Christian Prose and Poetry.

4. Tautology

A statement in which you say the same thing twice using different words in a way which i.e. not necessary.

5. They spoke in turn, one after the other.
 - Tautological – adj.
 - Tautologous – adj.

6. Innuendo

In this device the writer/speaker implies rather than expresses directly a given issue. This may be due to not having the nerve or just being polite.

7. They should give me the plate (Bampe ku sowaani). (When directed towards your father/mother fearing to send him/her directly.)
8. When a friend finds you having lunch and then says you are lucky to have a meal because for him, he has not eaten for four days! (He is indirectly asking for food because he is hungry)

9. Symbolism /Symbol

A person object, action or idea whose meaning transcends its literal or denotative sense in a complex way is called a symbol.

Symbolism is a device in writing which uses symbols.

A symbol is invested with significance beyond what it could carry on its own.

Conventional symbols are;

- The flag – nationalism
- The rose – love
- The pen – knowledge/wisdom
- The sword – force/dictatorship
- The spade – labour/workforce
- White flag – peace/surrender
- The gun – power, authority, death.

Fable:

Short didactic story often involving animals or supernatural beings and stressing a plot above character development, whose object is to teach a moral or pragmatic lesson e.g. Animal farm by George Orwell.

Allegory:

An allegory is a form of narrative that equates abstract ideas with people, places, and things, turning them into a story.

Allegory uses things to suggest other things in a story. The reader is intended to see the resemblance between the fact of the story and the ideas that are implied.

- Fables and parables are short allegories.
- A parable is a religious story with a good moral background to teach the reader.

10. The parables of the fig tree, the sower, the prodigal son.

11. Epigram:

- This is a short poem ending in a witty turn of thought.
- It can also mean any witty saying that ends antithetically or involving an apparent contradiction.

Here lies our honourable king
who never did a bad thing
nor a good one.

12. Epithet

This is a descriptive word or phrase into which has been packed an important meaning. The epithet is a vital figure in poetry and has become common words in every day usage:

13. Doubting Thomases
14. Peeping Toms
15. Let sleeping dogs lay.

16. Refrain

This is a form of repetition. This device involves repetition of a word, phrase or verse or a whole stanza at a regular or fairly regular intervals in a poem.

- Refrain is the equivalent of a chorus in music.
- Refrain is a key rhetorical device employed for emphasis and to underscore key phrases or words that carry the central message of a poem.

Through refrain, key words are hammered home and dominant emotions are given their due emphasis.

Ask me no more...
Ask me no more, where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose: